



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 3

COUNCILMEMBER KSHAMA SAWANT

Wednesday November 17, 2021

To Breier-Scheetz Properties & Terrace Crest Apartment Management:

The tenants at the Terrace Crest Apartments, which you own and manage, reached out to my office recently to ask for help. They have faced an ongoing, egregious situation of not having had hot water and/or heat for several weeks, since September 19. They report that you almost entirely ignored their numerous inquiries and complaints for that duration. You sent a response only after tenants started getting organized, reached out to my Council office for help, and began putting together a petition. Since then, you have made promises that you have not fulfilled.

At least 15 out of the 22 occupied apartments at Terrace Crest have signed onto the petition with clear demands on you to make things right:

- 1) Fix all hot water, heating, and other maintenance issues immediately, and**
- 2) Refund all rent paid by tenants for each day they did not have hot water or heat.**

My staff and I visited with the tenants in late October and we were extremely concerned to hear the problems they have faced, and how long you have failed to fix them. **I urge you to agree to their reasonable and just demands immediately.**

In the petition, Terrace Crest tenants describe the unacceptable conditions that you as their landlord have forced them to endure: *"The lack of hot water was immediately noticeable, and the lack of heat became extremely problematic as temperatures dropped. The landlord and management ignored repeated tenant complaints and even failed to officially notify tenants regarding the outage until October 21, 2021."*

By neglecting your responsibility to provide this most basic of necessities to your tenants, you have put their health and safety at risk. **One of your tenants who is 80 years old was in the hospital when the boiler broke down. When she returned home, she was forced to roll the dice on her recovery in an apartment with no hot water and no heat, for weeks.**



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I am aware that in response to initial organizing from tenants, you responded on October 21 with promises to address the issue as soon as possible. I understand that when the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) visited the building in early November, they made it clear that the hot water and heating issues had to be resolved within 3-5 days or the building would be declared uninhabitable. This was followed by more promises from you to tenants that the issue would be fixed urgently and it appears that some effort at follow-through was made shortly thereafter. **Nonetheless, as I write this letter, Terrace Crest tenants are still almost entirely without hot water. They have now resorted to contacting boiler companies themselves to get the problem assessed and fixed, since your company is clearly unwilling to do so in a serious way and with the urgency it requires.** This is utterly unacceptable!

My office will be following up with the SDCI to help facilitate an effective and timely response moving forward. But the tenants and I find ourselves asking the question: How can it be legal for a landlord like Breier-Scheetz Properties to own a building, collect rent each month, and then blatantly refuse to fix major code violations. The answer is that, in our view, this should absolutely not be legal! **My office will be exploring ways to pass legislation requiring landlords to compensate tenants when they fail to fix longstanding and serious housing code violations.** In the meantime, I again urge you to do the right thing by your tenants. Fix their issues immediately and refund the rent tenants paid to you for each day they went without hot water and/or heat.

Sincerely,

Kshama Sawant
Seattle City Councilmember